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Title : Need to address the problems of tobacco growers in Chamarajanagar Parliamentary constituency, Karnataka.

SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA (CHAMRAJANAGAR): Nearly 83 thousand farmers are engaged in the cultivation of tobacco in Karnataka. A farmer has to spend Rs. Thirty thousand to grow one barrel load of tobacco which includes the expenditure on three tons of fire-wood, loading and unloading charges, cost of fertilizers and pesticides, conditioning of raw tobacco, curing and grading charges. An average of Rs. Seventy Five is required to spend to produce one kg tobacco. Now-a-days the grower is getting an average return of Rs. Fifty per kg tobacco with the loss of Rs. Twenty Five per kg of tobacco. The grading system of tobacco followed by marketing causes a loss in its return. The cost of one kg tobacco starts from Rupees Thirty to Rupees One Hundred and Thirty depending upon the quality of tobacco produced after conditioning it in barrel.

Earlier the Tobacco Board has agreed to implement alternative fuel system to condition the tobacco inside barrel replacing the use of large quantity of fire wood to prevent deforestation and other environment related problems. The Tobacco Board has sufficient fund of Rs.160 crores in terms of penalty collected from the farmers who have cultivated tobacco additionally and in excess of the permitted limit. The tobacco board can utilize the fund to help the growers by providing an alternative fuel facility or bearing the transportation cost of coal. The fund should be utilized to benefit the tobacco growers while processing tobacco within the year 2020 as the country promised to WHO to improve the health condition of tobacco growers. Fixing the minimum support price (MSP) per kg tobacco will help the tobacco growers.

Hence, I would like to urge the centre to take step to extend the facilities to tobacco growers to make the tobacco cultivation a profitable occupation.